

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 have been amended to more definitely set forth the invention and obviate the rejection. Support for the amendment of Claim 1 can be found in the Specification in the discussion bridging pages 8 and 9. The present amendment is deemed not to introduce new matter. Claims 1-13 remain in the application.

The Examiner is thanked for noting that the references in the Specification are not a proper Information Disclosure Statement. Accordingly, a proper Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted herewith according to MPEP § 609A(1).

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the objection to the Abstract. A substitute Abstract is attached hereto which is believed to fully comply with MPEP § 608.01(b). Withdrawal of the objection to the Abstract is accordingly respectfully requested.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the objection to FIG. 4. The proposed drawing correction of FIG. 4 is being submitted herewith. In the drawing correction, the original FIG. 4 has been broken down into FIGS. 4(a) and 4(b), FIG. 4(a) showing the plan view of the bendable bottom member in an extended state and FIG. 4(b) showing a plan view of the bendable bottom member in a shortened state. The corrections to the drawings are shown in red, that is, FIG. 4(a) and FIG. 4(b) and the drawings are identified according to 37 § CFR 1.85. In addition, the Specification has been amended to reflect this drawing correction. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner approve the proposed drawing corrections.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the objection to Claims 3-5 and 7-9. These claims have been amended to call for a first and second beveled portions in accordance with the

Examiner's suggestions. The Examiner is thanked for calling this to applicant's attention. Withdrawal of the objection is accordingly respectfully requested.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of Claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Everard.

In the rejection the Examiner appears to describe the invention of Everard by applying the wording used in the present application and insists that the subject matter of Claim 1 of the present application could have been easily conceived of based on the invention of Everard. However, it is respectfully submitted that the invention described in the present application is quite different from that of Everard in the particular structure used as can be seen from the drawings, FIGS. 1-12.

In particular, the invention of Everard relates to a ramp used for allowing a wheelchair or the like to travel over a level difference of a road or the like, and it has a structure in which "several elongated tread plates are pivotally connected together to form the central load bearing portion of the ramp". The construction, in which a load bearing portion has plural treadplates pivotally connected with each other, is only partially similar in a general way to the construction in the invention of the present application. However, the treadplate assembly in the ramp of Everard can be wound for compact accommodation if the side rails are removed, and the respective adjacent treadplates are connected with each other for allowing the assembly as a whole to be bent in one rotating direction, but cannot be extended or shortened at their joints.

In contradistinction, the invention of the present application is characterized in that the structure, in which the plural bars connected with each other to form a bendable bottom allow the bottom to be bent in one rotating direction, and also can be extended and shortened at their joints. This structure is obviously quite different from that of Everard. As a result of this structural feature, the invention

of the present application has a feature as described in “Industrial Applicability” (Specification, pages 13 and 14), but the invention of Everard does not have such features at all.

Moreover, the invention of the present application is quite different from the invention of Everard, and the particular structure and the working effect exhibited by the structure. In order to more clearly distinguish from the Everard structure, Claim 1, the only independent claim in the application, has been amended to point out that the plurality of bars have a plurality of protrusions which extend into a plurality of recesses. Moreover, Claim 1 has been amended to point out more definitely that the disengagement preventing means comprises hooks formed at tips of some of the connecting protrusions and extendable into corresponding accepting recesses having steps therein adapted to engage the hooks. It is respectfully submitted, that these features are nowhere disclosed in Everard. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the Everard reference neither anticipates nor renders unpatentably obvious the subject matter as now called for in the amended claims herein. Consequently, the Examiner would be justified in no longer maintaining the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is accordingly respectfully requested.

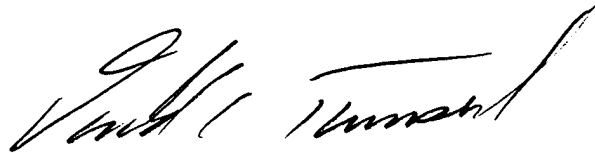
The numerous references noted by the Examiner as being made of record are noted, the Examiner apparently recognizing that these references are not relevant inasmuch as the Examiner has not predicated a rejection thereon.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance and early action and allowance thereof is accordingly respectfully requested.

If there is any reason why the application cannot be allowed at the present time, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned at the number listed below to resolve any problems.

Respectfully submitted,

TOWNSEND & BANTA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald E. Townsend', written in a cursive style.

Donald E. Townsend
Reg. No. 22,069

Date: May 27, 2003

TOWNSEND & BANTA
601 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Suite 900, South Building
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 220-3124